

THE
Important Question
DISCUSSED;
Or, a SERIOUS and IMPARTIAL
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
True INTEREST of ENGLAND
With Respect to the
CONTINENT.

Quapropter in adeundis periculis consuetudo
imitanda medicorum est, qui leviter ægrotantes
leniter curant; gravioribus autem morbis pericu-
osas curationes & ancipites adhibere coguntur.
Quare in tranquillo tempestate adversam op-
erari, dementis est; subvenire autem tempestati-
vis ratione, sapientis.

CIC. de Offic. I. i. c. 24.

L O N D O N :

Printed for M. COOPER, at the Globe in Pater-
noster-Row, MDCCXLVI. [Price 1 s.]

*Special
Collections*



Douglas Library

Presented by

Dr. A.R.M. Lower,
1965

KINGSTON ONTARIO CANADA



T H E
Important Question
DISCUSSED, &c

OUR domestic troubles being at length happily driven into a remote corner of the Island, and our minds somewhat recovered from the late alarms, 'tis now time for the wisdom of the Nation to consider and determine, which way we are to turn next, and what measures to pursue for the future? Whether it may be more expedient to disband part of those land-forces, which are now swarming in the island, and to retrench the excessive expences which we have been at for some years past; or to reassume our former scheme of Politics, and punctually to fulfil our engagements with

B

our

our allies upon the Continent? Whether it may be more conducive to the true interest of this nation, to rely wholly upon that situation which disjoins it from the rest of the world, to encrease its naval force, and to give its great application to the Marine, without concerning itself with the intrigues of the neighbouring states; or once more to cover Flanders with our troops, to negotiate, to fight, and to expend our treasure, in restraining the over-grown power of France, and in preserving the balance of power in Europe?

As the late urgent necessity of our own affairs made it expedient for us to recall the greatest part of our forces from abroad, so the present unanimity of the nation in supporting our domestic peace, together with the valour, good conduct, and Reputation of his Royal Highness the Duke, has once more put it into our power to pursue either of the abovementioned schemes, as shall be deemed most advantageous to the commonwealth; and may the good Genius of England inspire and assist the public councils upon this important deliberation!

I know there are multitudes of people ready, with an air of confidence, to ask upon this occasion, what has this Kingdom at all to do with the Continent? Imperial, independant, self-sufficient, separated by nature from all the rest of the world, why should

Should we busy ourselves with the affairs of other nations, and by interposing in their quarrels make ourselves parties in matters, which very little, if at all, concern us? In short, what relation to, what connection has this island with the Terra Firma?

I have not the presumption to think, that any thing, I shall offer to the public, will be decisive upon a question, which puzzles, or seems at least to puzzle, the most able politicians in the nation. However, as a free-born Englishman, as one truly affected with whatever may relate to the good of his country, I shall venture to express my impartial sentiments upon this point, and shall think myself extremely fortunate, if haply it may be in my power, to satisfy the minds of some of my less-knowing countrymen, and to throw the least degree of light upon a subject, which the wit of declaiming demagogues, rather than any obscurity in the thing itself, has perplexed and darkened.

ENGLAND then, in all enquiries of this kind, in all enquiries concerning its true interest, is not to be considered merely as it is in itself, but with all its circumstances and adjuncts. We are not to regard it only as an Island abounding with all the necessaries and conveniences of life, but as a trading Island; as an Island, which owes all its wealth, and consequently all its power, and influence among the Kingdoms, to an extensive

tensive commerce; and by this line are our British Politics to be ever squared. 'Tis our power and influence abroad, which support and defend our national trade, whilst commerce, in return, brings in that balance of wealth in our favour, which can alone beget and maintain the other two: take away but a single link of this chain, and the whole system, which hangs upon it, immediately falls to the ground and is destroyed.

'Tis *Trade* then which builds the bridge, as it were, cross the narrow seas, which firmly connects this Island with the Continent, and makes it absolutely necessary for us to concern ourselves with the affairs of our neighbours, of those nations more especially with whom we traffic, and from whose various wants we draw those sure returns of wealth, which both support our credit abroad, and are the best security of our own internal peace and happiness. For, were we to trade only with ourselves, or with our own Colonies, the utmost we could pretend to, would be to transfer the necessaries, or perhaps the luxuries of life, from one part of the country to another, without making the least addition to the national riches; such a kind of commerce is indeed no more than paying with the one hand, and receiving with the other.

I lay it down therefore as a self-evident maxim, that the prosperity of our national trad

trade depends entirely upon our foreign custom, and the quickness of our commercial returns with other countries ; and consequently, that whatever tends to deprive us of this custom, or to exclude us from the necessary markets wherein to dispose of our commodities, so far ruins our trade, dries up that surest fountain of our wealth, and destroys our influence and power abroad.

Suppose then, *in the first place*, that the Sea-Coasts of Holland, Flanders, Portugal, Genoa and Tuscany, were in the hands of our enemies, what would be the undoubted consequences of such an event with regard to this nation ? the supposition is at least possible, and therefore there can be no absurdity in arguing from it. We will, *secondly*, examine, what probability there may be, that thus it will really happen, that these coasts will actually fall into the hands of our enemies, upon supposition of the neutrality of England with respect to the continent ; or, what comes to much the same thing, upon supposition that England acts only with its fleet, and its negotiations, in defence of its allies upon the continent.

Upon the former of these suppositions then, it would unavoidably, and immediately follow, that the amicable, and convenient ports of Holland would be no more open to receive us, and that the Dutch Trade would fail in all its several branches; Flanders would take

take off no more of our woollen-goods, and that beneficial commerce, which has subsisted for so many ages between England and the Netherlands, would be now absolutely at an end : the friendly Portuguese would no longer have it in their power to exchange the rich product of the Brazils for our British Manufactures, whilst our returns from the Mediterranean would become precarious, uncertain, and hardly worth our looking after ; nor would even Gibraltar and Mahon answer the great expence of their fortifications, and garrisons. Such then would be the natural and necessary consequence, supposing only a bare prohibition of trade with the above-mention'd countries, that there were no fleets we need stand in any awe of, no privateers to interrupt our navigation, and to raise the value of convoys, insurance, &c, this then is the most favourable supposition we can make for England, and yet who sees not, who is there but must acknowledge, that even in this case, within the compass of a very few years, our ruin would be certain and inevitable ?

'Tis true, a kind of Turkey or Levant-Trade would be still left us to subsist upon ; nor would the African, the East and West-Indian, or our Northern Traffic presently fail us---- but would these poor remains of our former commerce be sufficient to maintain the honour and independance, the present dignity

dignity and splendor of the English name? Would they be able to support those numerous armaments by sea, which are to strike terror and consternation into all the rest of the world? I am afraid not! For if it be made a question, even in our present situation, whether the *Turky-Trade*, for instance, be of any very great advantage to the nation; whether the balance of our returns from that country be much in our favour; surely the matter will be put quite out of all doubt, when the additional delays and expence of convoys, insurance, &c, be taken into the account; when the continual risques of Neapolitan, Italian, Spanish and French privateers are computed, when expos'd to winds and tempests there are no friendly harbours left for our ships to put into, throughout the whole navigation, but Mahon and Gibraltar.

The *African trade* is, at present, extremely beneficial to this nation, as it furnishes slaves for our American plantations, which could not so easily, or so cheaply be carried on, without such kind of workmen. The Drugs, Gums, Ivory, &c of that country are so far really advantageous to the Public, as they are taken in exchange for our own commodities, and bring an addition of wealth into the land by a re-exportation of them. For as to that part of them, which we may consume upon ourselves, however it contribute to the luxury, it will make but a very

is very poor accession to the national riches. No ! 'tis our vending these, and such-like foreign commodities, again ; 'tis our making a profit of the work of our slaves, by selling the fruits of their labour, in Sugar, Tobacco, &c, to the other States of Europe, which turns the balance of commerce in our favour, and goes on continually increasing the national stock.—But, upon our present supposition, that the coasts of Holland, &c, were in our enemy's hands, or, in other words, in the hands of France, our best markets would be all intirely shut up from us, and our old and constant customers, however willing they might be, would not even have it in their power, to lay out a single penny with us.— Our Goods, therefore, of all kinds, would lie rotting in our warehouses, for want of people to take them off our hands ; and, even in the strictest sense of the words, we should have nothing more than our labour for all our industry, skill, and expence.

The same observations, likewise, will easily demonstrate, that, in the circumstances abovementioned, our *East-Indian Trade* must soon be ruined, or at least greatly reduced from what it now is. For were we to import no other, or no more of the commodities of those distant countries, than what we spent upon ourselves, to gratify our own palates, or to furnish our own houses, so far

far would this traffic be from redounding to the advantage of England, that it would soon be found extremely ruinous and detrimental to its true interest. For, as I have been well-informed, the balance upon the first exchange with the Natives of the East is really against us. Nothing, therefore, but a re-exportation of some part of our Indian goods, and making money of them that way, can reimburse the nation its original expences. 'Tis this alone then, which makes this branch of our commerce beneficial to the Public, as well as to those private persons who are more immediately concerned in carrying it on.

As to our *Trade with the northern states of Europe*, for Iron, Timber, Hemp, Tar, &c, however necessary it may be to answer the continual demands of our shipping, yet is the balance upon these articles, I believe, confessedly against us at present— how much more then, when we come to swell the bill with the extraordinary charge of convoys, insurance, and other such-like accidents?

'Tis true, every branch of our navigation, tho' it turns to no other account, is so far advantageous to the Nation, as it finds constant employment for our seamen, and becomes a nursery, upon occasion, for the royal navy. 'Tis this is the great benefit of our present *Coasting-trade* at home, and one extraordinary advantage, which the king-

dom reaps from its commerce with the *West-Indian plantations*. But will a number of seamen alone, however great we may suppose it, without being employed in a lucrative foreign trade, add to the riches of the nation, or support the great and necessary expences of government?— Did not, therefore, our West-indian plantations produce somewhat more than was spent amongst our own people, or consumed in the family, as I may properly enough call it, they would make but a very small addition, either of wealth or power to their Mother-Country. They might, indeed, prevent large sums of money from being carried out of the kingdom in payment for such things as luxury has now rendered almost necessary to life, but would bring none into it. 'Tis, therefore, the exporting the superfluities of those regions (tobacco, sugar, fish, &c) as well as our own, 'tis disposing of them among our neighbours and turning the balance into cash, which alone gives riches and power to the community, and makes the number of our seamen a real gain to the Public, as well as a strength and bulwark to defend it. But if it be trade only which begets, as well as maintains seamen, I believe I may venture safely enough to assert, that we shall never be over-burthened with this useful set of men, when once our European commerce begins to decline.

In a word, the good providence of God hath blessed this island with an abundance of all things necessary for the preservation, convenience, and even pleasures of life, whilst the art and industry of its inhabitants have so far increased and perfected, if I may say so, its natural stores, that we have not only sufficient Corn, Cloth, &c to serve our own wants, but likewise to answer the great demands of those other countries, where Nature has been more sparing of her favours, and the mechanic arts have not been cultivated with so great success. 'Tis the sale of this superfluity to Foreigners, the product of our own industry, labour, and skill, which turns to a national account, either as it directly brings us home money in payment, or is exchanged for other Commodities, which re-exported return at last to their mother-country in large tributes of that shining Ore, which, as the world goes, is credit, power, every thing.

Give me leave then once more to repeat my former question, upon the present supposition, where shall we find markets to vend these superfluities, or customers to take them off our hands? We are unhappily excluded the Ports of Holland, Flanders, France, Portugal, Spain, and Italy! will not such exclusion necessarily bring on an immeditate reduction of our exportations? and what will be the certain consequence of such reduction?

our

our trading vessels will lie-mouldering in our harbours for want of employment; our seamen will betake themselves to some more gainful profession for a livelihood; our natural as well as artificial commodities, our corn, cattle, cloth, &c, will be thrown upon our hands, because there will be no body permitted to buy them of us; so that the value of these goods, even for home consumption, will sink almost to nothing; our numerous poor will want work, our tenants will not be able to pay their rents, money will become scarce, and at an excessive interest, whilst the price of land will be inconceivably reduced.

How then shall the Royal Navy, the pride, and glory, and immediate bulwark of this nation, be maintained? we can never have less than two hundred ships of war, great and small, in commission, as well to secure our remaining trade, as to defend our extended coasts, and annoy our vigilant enemies. But how shall this numerous fleet be supported, when that great branch of the public revenue, which arises from imposts, customs, &c begins to fail, as fail it necessarily must, upon a defect of our importations, and when the greatest part of Europe will be precluded trading with us? will the Land alone be able to bear the heavy load of the public expence? impossible supposition! the landed and trading interests are naturally

naturally and inseparably connected, and ought never to be divided, even in imagination ; the value of land will always be found to be higher or lower in proportion to the increase or failure of commerce— Nay, even that multitude of its people, which is indeed the strength, and glory, and riches of a nation, whilst they can all be employ'd, without trade becomes a sore and intolerable burthen to it.

I know it has been frequently asserted, that a sea-war, especially with France, if vigorously pursued, will always be able to maintain itself, with a very little additional expence to the public.— I dare not charge the gentlemen, who are so fond of spreading this doctrine, with insincerity ; but sure I am there is not the least appearance of a foundation to support it. For is this the case at present ? do the rich captures, we are every day making upon the French and Spaniards, contribute in the least to the diminution of the national charge of the war ? Private persons, I grant, have already gotten, and, 'tis probable, in the course of a long war, will be still getting, immense wealth ; but of what advantage is all this to the Public, as such ? have we already, or are we likely to have, a single tax the less for all our captures ?— But I may go still farther, and venture to assert, that upon the present supposition, our very prizes (unless they always consisted of coin

coin or bullion) would be a detriment to the Public: they would be a manifest detriment to the Public, as we should not be able to dispose of their bulk abroad; and consequently to make use of them at home, at the same time that it would over-stock our markets, would lessen the consumption, and sink the value of our own commodities.

In short, 'tis a constant and copious exportation of our own Goods and Manufactures, an extensive foreign trade, a free and open market with as many people as possible, which are the Royal Golden-Mines, and constitute the great riches of this Nation: 'tis this which employs our Poor, enhances the price of our Land, enables us both easily and chearfully to pay our taxes, supports our fleets and armies, gives us power at home, and encreases our influence abroad, puts the Balance of Europe into our hands, and makes the English name courted, and respected, in almost every kingdom of the known world. Whatever therefore tends to diminish this advantageous commerce, and to ruin our trade with the other nations of Europe, is so far destructive of the happiness, of the true interest of England: but this must be the unavoidable and necessary effect of a prohibition of trade with Holland, Flanders, France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy: the consequence therefore of these countries being in the possession, or under the influence of our enemies

mies, is too plain not to be foreseen, and too fatal not to be dreaded, not to be vigorously opposed by every real friend of his country.

Hitherto I have argued upon the supposition, that we were still to continue masters of the sea, that there was no power who would even attempt to dispute this important province with us, and that we had nothing to fear upon this head from France and her Allies. If then the hazard to England be so great, even upon this most favourable review of the case; how is its danger magnified, and with what shocking circumstances attended, when we turn the perspective, and view the face of things, as in all probability it will appear within the compass of a very few years? when we shall see a superior fleet riding in our channel, commanding the narrow seas, and menacing our trembling shores on every side; when every breath of wind from the east shall put us into a Panic, for every thing that is dear and valuable to us. If this prospect frightens, let it at the same time animate us with courage and resolution to oppose the first beginnings of so leading and fatal a mischief; that man, I am sure, has very little true regard for the Religion, honour, independance, and safety of his country, who would not sacrifice his last penny, rather than expose it to so imminent a danger.

'Tis granted, France is by no means our match by sea at present, nor are its numerous land-armies immediately formidable to England united within itself, whilst its naval force continues in the dejected state it now is ! but how long will this be the case, upon our present supposition ? too short a time, I doubt, for the happiness and independance of this Realm ! for when once the ports of Holland, with all their conveniences for building, manning, and equipping a fleet, are in the disposition of our enemies, what acceffions may they not be every day making to their royal navy ? their ships of war will be continually encreasing, in spite of all our efforts to prevent them, and every hour will add to our danger. For what has not this country to fear, when the skill, industry and patience of Holland, shall be united with the spirit and activity of France ?

If Lewis XIV under all imaginable disadvantages, alone, surrounded with enemies on every side, envied and suspected by the Spaniard, feared by the Dutch, at war with the Empire, was nevertheless able to create, as it were, a fleet, which made the conjoined squadrons of both England and Holland tremble-- what mighty things may not the ministry of Lewis XV effect, when it has no diversion of any consequence to stand in awe of from the Continent, Spain in alliance, the Netherlands subdued, the Empire exhausted, the rich

rich mines of Peru at their disposal, the magazines and seamen of Holland at their command ? the infinite resources in the country itself, its great fertility and convenient situation for naval dominion, the nature of its present Constitution, the great multitude of its people, the ready obedience of all to the commands of their prince, the high idea which every man conceives of the glory and honour of his country, must render France ever terrible to its neighbours, whether it still continues to apply itself, as it has hitherto chiefly done, to make conquests upon the continent, or, as is most probable, should at length turn its great study and attention to the forming and completing its marine.

'Tis true, whilst we continued masters of the sea, we should be able greatly to interrupt the French commerce, and by that means should in some measure cut off that copious fountain of their wealth, which has hitherto contributed so largely to the support of their numerous armies. This, I grant, would greatly distress them for a season, tho' I am far from being sanguine enough to imagine with too many of my countrymen, that it would entirely ruin them. For whilst there is a single penny circulating in his country, the French King may command it, and, if he wills so, must have it. 'Tis this then that gives him that exorbitant power, and renders him so truly formidable to all his neighbours— that

he has nothing to consult in laying taxes, but his own ambition, that he is always sure of money to carry on both his military and corrupting schemes, if there be any to be had in his kingdom. His subjects, indeed, may inwardly murmur, may groan under the weight of these grievous impositions; but, such is their unhappy situation, they must nevertheless pay them. It was this plenitude of his power, which enabled old Lewis to bring such formidable armies into the field, even to the last, when royal Navy he had none, when the national Trade was reduced to almost nothing, when an immense Debt had overwhelmed the public credit, and a long and unsuccessful war with all his neighbours had cut off the flower of his country.

'Tis in vain therefore, 'tis absolutely contrary to experience to imagine, that we shall be ever able to put a stop to the progress of the French arms upon the continent, merely by interrupting their commerce by sea. The utmost we can this way pretend to, will be to prejudice their trade for a time; for totally to ruin it, I am afraid, will never be in our power, unless, in the most literal sense of the word, we were able to cover the Ocean with our vessels. Their Merchantmen, under small convoys, or even without any, will be continually slipping backwards and forwards from one port to another, in spite of all we can do to prevent them,

them, whilst sometimes a South-sea, sometimes a Register-ship with its rich freight, safely arrived at Brest or Cadiz, will enable them to maintain their armies, and carry their all-conquering schemes into execution.

However, that we may entirely deprive our *Themistocleans*, such amongst us as are for trusting only to our *wooden walls* for our security, of all possible room for farther cavil and objection, we will go one step farther yet; we will even suppose, that the French will not for some time after they are in possession of Holland, &c, particularly apply themselves to the augmentation of their Navy; that, still engaged with their neighbours upon the Terra-firma, they will wholly leave the guard of their Coasts and Trade to their numerous Privateers, and to a few men of war only, whose number they will take care to encrease from time to time, as occasion offers,— yet how long shall we be able to maintain the sovereignty of the seas, even without an enemy who will dare to come to an open engagement with us! Our very strength will destroy us, and we must inevitably sink under the weight of our own power. For, to preserve our Trade in the West-Indies from Spanish, French, and Dutch Privateers and Frigates, to defend our colonies from the formidable enemy at their back, we must have a constant and numerous fleet in those parts. We must be continually

continually sending strong convoys, with all sorts of necessaries for our ships and forces in those countries. We must have another considerable navy continually riding in the Mediterranean, as well to protect our Levant-trade and to cover Mahon and Gibraltar, as to distress and annoy our enemies. Other ships of force we must have upon the coast of Africa, and in the East-Indies; while still more numerous fleets must be left at home to quiet the apprehensions of the people, and to defend our own shores, with those of Scotland and Ireland, from the perpetual insults of our insolent neighbours. May it not then be fairly asked, how are all these ships to be maintained, and where shall we create Funds sufficient to pay such a numerous army of seamen, and to answer all other the prodigious demands of so mighty a Navy?

If it be suggested, as it has been sometimes done, that our land-forces with all their appendages, that our Pensions and Subsidies to foreign Princes, are little less than unnecessary to the service of the kingdom, and that this whole expence may be safely converted to the sole use of the fleet—to this it may be replied, that the suggestion itself is fundamentally wrong; for in the first place it supposes that when all the Ports of Holland, Flanders, Portugal, &c, are in the hands of our enemies, and a trade with them

absolutely prohibited, we shall still be able to raise as much money upon the Public, as we do at present; but this there is no thinking person but will acknowledge to be absolutely impossible. For the interruption, or ruin rather, of our European-trade, at the same time that it necessarily drags along with it a great part of the public Revenue, will cause likewise a fall in the value of our lands; and consequently those two plentiful resources of our present wealth and credit will be then wholly cut off, or at least extremely diminished. Secondly, it supposes, that tho' there be scarcely a fortified town or castle in the whole country, tho' our Metropolis itself be without walls, and defenceless, yet that there is not the least need of any standing-army, or regular-forces to guard and protect this Island— But this suggestion let our late violent hurries and consternation, our late frights and pannics answer.

Thus then must it necessarily happen, such will be the terrible situation of this island, whenever the ports of Holland, Flanders, &c, shall be either in the hands of France, or under the influence and direction of that implacable enemy—the inevitable ruin of our trade, and speedy destruction of our civil and religious liberties. But, we thank almighty God, things are not yet reduced to this desperate state, tho' the grand Crisis seems not to be far

far off. The fatal impending stroke may be perhaps yet averted, if we seize the present favourable opportunity of joining with our Allies, who invoke our assistance, and, in strict union with them, act with that vigor and unanimity which the importance of the occasion demands. The great end we are to aim at, the measure we are ever steadily to pursue, is to prevent the above-mentioned countries from falling into the power of the house of Bourbon. Our prosperity, our very existence as a free, independant and protestant nation, depends upon this single point; there is no thinking man but sees this, and no sincere friend of his country but acknowledges it, and is for taking every step to prevent it.

The only question therefore before us at present is, how this great point may most certainly be brought to a happy conclusion? whether it may be best effected by breaking at once all our treaties with our Allies upon the Continent, by encreasing our Navy, and turning our whole thoughts as well as revenue, towards maintaining the superiority of our Fleet; or by steadily persisting in those measures, which both we, and the wisdom of our forefathers, have pursued for more than these two ages past, and, in strict conjunction with our Allies, acting vigorously against the common enemy by land, as well as sea? If indeed it could clearly be made appear,

appear, that our Allies were sufficiently provided to take care of themselves; that they were a match for the house of Bourbon, and well-able to defend their own territories, without the assistance of men and money from us—then perhaps it might not be inexpedient to follow that scheme of conduct which might be most saving of the treasure of the nation—but if the contrary be evident; if it be most evident that the Dutch, for instance, are by no means able to withstand the French, either alone or joined with any succours they may have reason to expect from their neighbours on the continent; the consequence is then indisputable, is indeed self-evident, that we must either assist them in that way in which only we can give them the necessary assistance, (that is, by land) or we must perish with them—the alternative is certain.

Let me then ask the most sanguine of our *Themistocleans*, how long they think Holland, oppressed as it is with Debts, its Treasury exhausted, its Trade upon the whole declining, its Fleet out of repair, divided into factions, and, from the nature of its civil constitution, perpetually exposed to the undermining attacks of French gold— how long they imagine the United-Provinces, in this distressful situation, will be able to withstand the numerous and approaching armies of France? their own forces, most confederately,

sedly, are absolutely unequal to the arduous task— But may they not hire as many troops as are necessary from their neighbours on the other side of the Rhine, who are always ready enough to dispose of their subjects upon such occasions?— But how will it be possible for them, alone and unsupported, to find all the necessary sums, as well to answer their own pressing demands, as to evade the intrigues of their potent enemy? at best, how slow are the motions, and what difficulties generally attend the march, the recruiting, and the command of such sort of mercenaries? But we will even suppose that the Dutch army was already joined with thirty or forty thousand Austrians, Germans, &c, and that their whole number amounted to eighty thousand effective men— yet what could even such an army do at this important crisis? Would it be able to meet an hundred thousand French in the field, and at the same time to cover towns, secure garrisons, &c? Such an army, it is true, if it could be got together, and got together in time, (which I believe will be somewhat difficult, considering the low estate of the imperial Finances) might delay matters, might defer the fate of Holland for a little while, but could not possibly stop the continual progress of the French arms, and save it from being swallowed up at last. In short, upon supposition of the Neutrality of England, and for England not

to act by land as well as by sea in defence of its allies upon the Continent is really to be neutral; I say, upon supposition of the Neutrality of England, Holland in all probability would be reduced under the French yoke in two, or three, Campaigns at farthest. If our superior fleet was not able to save even Ostend from these conquerors, surely it will be still of less service in protecting the inland towns of the Low-Countries— Nor could any diversion we might be able to make by attacking the French Sea-Coasts be of the least advantage to our allies, or give any great interruption to the schemes of the grand enemy; as these towns are always well prepared against any sudden invasion, and require but a small proportion of forces to defend them.

I must therefore lay it down as an undoubted fact, nor can it be too much insisted upon in the present conjuncture, that the Dutch are not able to defend themselves by their own strength; that, whether the Empire be at peace or war with France, the succours, which may reasonably be expected from thence for the service of the Low-Countries, will not be sufficient to save them, and consequently, that nothing but our sending a good body of land forces from England, or, what comes to much the same thing, taking a proper number of foreign forces into our own pay, and acting

E vigorously

in conjunction with our allies will be able to do it ; and happy will it be for both nations, if this measure be found effectual.

I repeat it again, *acting vigorously in conjunction with our Allies* ; for without them, unless they likewise will heartily concur with us, and exert their whole power, our utmost efforts will be vain and ineffectual to save them, they must necessarily perish, and, however fatal the consequence may be to ourselves, we must stand by and see it. For no Administration will be ever able to vindicate its conduct to the nation for wasting its blood and treasure in defence of its neighbours, unless there be some prospect of succeeding in the glorious attempt, which there cannot be, if we are deserted and left to act alone. England, Holland, and the Empire ! what can they not do, whilst they continue united ! to what affrighting dangers are they not, each in their turn, exposed, whenever they suffer envy, jealousy, distrust, and mutual suspicion to divide and weaken them !

'Tis, indeed, extremely unfortunate to be placed in such a troublesome situation, where our national happiness so intimately depends upon that of other people ; but whilst we are a trading nation, thus it must necessarily be ; our Customers are our strength and support ; reduce them therefore to such a state of weakness and dependance as no longer to have it in their

their power to lay out their money with us, and we must sink of course; what therefore we cannot prevent, 'tis our duty to make the best of— If my neighbour's unkindness, or ingratitude, or misconduct, will not let me save him for his own sake, self-interest must make me endeavour at least to save him for my own. If we are resolved to defend the town to the utmost, we must take care to preserve the outworks as long as possible. What then the Austrian Netherlands are to Holland, that is Holland to England, its bulwark and barrier, and consequently we are very little less concerned in its defence, than the Dutch themselves are— *more concerned* we neither are, nor can be ; and therefore 'tis highly unreasonable in our neighbours, if they expect that we should continue to do more for them, than they seem willing to do for themselves : whilst we are ready to meet them half way, and heartily to join with them in carrying on the common cause— this is the utmost they ought to require of us, and is indeed encouragement sufficient for them to put an end to that temporizing conduct, which they have so long pursued, and enter upon the most vigorous measures as well for their present as future security against the open and infidious attacks of their inveterate enemy.

If we now proceed to consider the political condition of the other states of Europe, it will be

be no difficult matter to demonstrate in the first place the utter impossibility there is, that the King of Sardinia, or those other Estates of Italy, which belong to the Emperor, or the House of Austria, should be ever able to withstand the power of France, Spain, and Naples, upon supposition that England was once come to a resolution to act with its Fleet only in their defence. For if those countries are at present in so imminent a hazard of sinking under the weight, oppressed, as they are, by the different branches of the House of Bourbon, how much more terrible will be their situation, when there is no farther diversion to be hoped for in Flanders to call off part of the French forces, and no more money to be expected from England to give life and spirit to the distressed and exhausted natives ? He that knows any thing of the matter will readily acknowledge, that, in these circumstances, the conquest of Italy would scarcely be more than the busines of a single campaign. This well deserves the most serious consideration both of the Swiss, and the Venetians.

'Tis true, Italy was formerly remarkable for being fatal to the armies of France, so that it has been emphatically stiled by some Historians, their Grave. But the conquest of this country will be much more easily executed in the present situation of their affairs, backed as they are by Naples, and supported by the whole

whole power of Spain—and will our fleets be able to prevent the Spaniard from sending continual supplies to his forces in Italy by sea? with all our skill and vigilance, we have not hitherto been able to effect even thus much: or will they be sufficient to prevent numerous armies from perpetually marching into it over land? will it keep off the siege or bombardment of Turin?—we have indeed a noble navy, nor is it, I believe, more than truth to assert, that the royal fleet of England would be a match for all the rest of Europe together, could it fairly engage with their conjoined squadrons in the open seas. But let us not expect impossibilities from our ships, let us not vainly expect them to sail and act upon dry land, or to command the winds and seasons.

We have no trade at present, which turns to a greater national account, than that which is carried on with Portugal. 'Tis our undoubted interest, therefore, to watch over their independance, to warn them of future dangers, to take every measure for their security, and to maintain their crown, as 'tis at present settled, in the Braganza family. But who is so weak as to imagine, that after the Spaniards have once finished their conquests in Italy, they will not renew their ancient and repeated pretensions to this kingdom? and how long will Portugal, if left to its own strength only, be able to hold out against

against the united forces of France and Spain, or even against the arms of Spain alone if it acts with its whole vigour? yet this must be the case, they must be left to their own strength only; for where shall they procure the necessary succours? Holland and Italy are by this time no more; and as to England, its new scheme of acting by sea only, should it ever be embraced, will not permit it to send forty thousand land-men to their assistance— and yet we may depend upon it, that the fleet which was not able to defend Ostend, will be as little available in preserving Lisbon from the hands of its enemies. Portugal therefore, like all the rest of its neighbours, must soon be reduced to beg for terms, and yield to the superior power of the House of Bourbon.

I have hitherto taken but little notice of the German-Empire, in examination of the several points before me; not for want of any respect to that august body, but because I really look upon it as utterly unable of itself to prevent the conquest of Holland, Italy, or Portugal. I grant indeed, whilst the whole Empire, whilst the several members of that huge disproportioned body continue firmly united under one head, and may be persuaded to act against the general enemy with one heart and hand, as there is reason to hope it may in the present juncture, much, very much, may be expected from the

German

German valour and military experience in favour of the liberties of Europe, if properly supported. For valour and experience alone are not sufficient to maintain the common cause, where the nerves of war are weak and defective—We will suppose then that the empire had determined to attack France on the side of Alsace with all its force—but where shall it find money to put the active resolutions of its Diet into execution, and to support so numerous an army, as such an expedition will require? Trade there is but little in all that vast region, to promote a perpetual circulation of cash, and fill the exchequers of its several princes: want of money therefore will be now, as it has likewise been for these many ages past, an invincible obstacle to the military operations of the Germanic body.

'Tis probable indeed was Germany itself to be again attacked as we have frequently seen it of late, the brave natives would even hazard their lives without pay, where their own liberty was so immediately concerned: but how would this contribute to the preservation of Holland, and to the independance of the rest of Europe?— He who thinks of invading a foreign country with success, a country populous and firmly united in itself, must not only have treasure enough to furnish his soldiers with their continual subsistence, but to procure all the necessary intelligence, to erect magazines, to provide constant

stant supplies of ammunition, and those ten-thousand other things, which a large army is in perpetual need of. Where then shall the Empire procure the money requisite for so great an undertaking? at home it cannot raise it; that is absolutely impossible; and Holland is too much distressed to furnish all the necessary sums: recourse therefore must be had to England; and how ought we to act in this case? are we calmly to see the good dispositions of the Empire lost for want of a little pecuniary assistance! there is no man, I hope, in the whole nation so very mean-spirited as to give this advice—in spite therefore of all their resolutions to the contrary, even our *Themistocleans*, in this instance, would find themselves under a sort of necessity of breaking thro' their naval plan of operations, and of intermeddling in the affairs of the continent.

As to the more Northern Powers of Europe, they are too far removed from the scene of action, and think themselves too little concerned in the present danger to act with that vigour and resolution, which the common necessities of Europe require. Money, indeed, if plentifully bestowed may do much with them, and persuade them to almost any thing; the prince who bids highest may command their forces, or at least their neutrality, without much regard paid to the justice of his cause, or indeed to their own true interest. But in the present

present circumstances of things, who shall hire this northern army? The Dutch will be too much engaged in their own necessary defence to be able to spare all the cash requisite for this purpose; nor will our new scheme of politics (should it ever obtain) permit England to give pensions to their princes, or to take their troops into our pay—if it will, why all that clamour against former measures of this nature, and the unreasonable outcry against the present plan of acting?—If indeed the Empire, as such, should be formally attacked by the House of Bourbon, self-preservation, 'tis probable, may incline the Northern princes to send it some assistance, even upon the most easy terms; but unless this was to be the case, they will very little concern themselves with what becomes of the rest of Europe, any farther than mere weight of metal may be able to operate upon them—In general, people are but too well pleased to see their neighbours humbled, and their rivals in trade, or power, or influence, reduced a little lower, without considering (whilst the danger is at some distance from them) how the event may in the end affect themselves. 'Tis this ill-natured, or envious principle shall I call it? which has so effectually blinded the eyes of some of my own countrymen, and will have the same unhappy effect upon the more remote states of Europe, whilst they regard

only the present, and neglect the true interest of their country.

I should be extremely glad to be well convinced, that the power of France was not indeed so great, as it has been here represented ; that ruined in its trade, exhausted of men and money, neither Holland, England or the rest of Europe, had any thing, as yet, to fear from its restless machinations. But this would be to cry peace, peace, where there was no peace ; it would be lulling ourselves into a fatal security, when the danger was really greatest, and consequently, however quietly we might sit under such a calm for a little while, the paroxysm would soon return upon us with redoubled fury.— 'Tis indisputable, I think, that the power of France has never appeared greater, nor more formidable, than it has since the death of the late emperor Charles VI ; because never was it so firmly united with Spain before, as it has been since the furious clamour of a mistaken and deceived people drove us into a war with this latter nation. From this remarkable Era may we truly date the beginning of our own calamities, as well as those under which the rest of Europe groans— We knew the Spaniards alone were not able to withstand the power of England, therefore, right or wrong, we will make war with them !— no ! for that very reason we will not make war with them,

them, unless absolute necessity reduces us to it, because we shall by this means necessarily force them to throw themselves, *Carte blanche*, into the arms of France for assistance, and consequently by our own folly and rashness effect that very measure for our most dangerous enemy, which all the policy, cunning, and even force of old Lewis could never thoroughly bring about.

'Tis this strict Union then between France and Spain, which adds so much real strength to the House of Bourbon, and gives it a terror, which it never so completely had before. For what will not the inexhaustible treasures of the Indies do, when distributed by the most able politicians? They will not only maintain armies, but even blind the eyes of the wise against their own true interest, they will defend former acquisitions, and purchase new ones, which could not otherwise be so easily conquered— nor will it ever be in our power (whatever some people may affect to think) however wisely our ships of war may be stationed and distributed, to prevent large quantities of the all-powerful metal from being continually imported both into France and Spain.

The old Spaniards, it is probable, are not quite so well pleased to be thus unequally yoked with the French, but that they wish themselves fairly got rid of their insolent companions. They are too politic not to see,

that

that this union between the two nations must terminate at length in their absolute dependance upon that encroaching Power, which never lets slip any opportunity of fixing and establishing its own authority— but what shall they do to help themselves in the present exhausted condition of their country, poor and half peopled?— nay, should even their present king or queen die, and by that means furnish them with a sort of opportunity of attempting to shake off that abject dependance, which is every day encreasing upon them, yet I don't see how they will be able to make a proper use of the conjuncture in reasserting their former Liberty. Their own natural strength, 'tis certain, is by no means sufficient to enable them to throw off the French influence and dominion over them. To whom then shall they fly for relief? not to England, their old friends and support in time of danger and distress; because we are at war with them; and, what is still worse, at war with them, I am afraid, we must ever be, whilst we persist in our Resolution of not making any peace with them but upon the previous condition of no search but in Port.— I do not so much insist upon the mutual intermarriages between the two states; but it wants no great political penetration to see, that whilst Spain is at war with England, and Italy and Portugal remain unconquered, France may be always sure of commanding

commanding the Spanish councils, the Spanish treasures, and the Spanish arms.

Still less reason have we to expect, that when once the King of Sardinia, and the Duchy of Tuscany shall be reduced, the Italian branches of the house of Bourbon should ever attempt to reassume their liberty, and shake off the authority, which France is every day acquiring over them. If Don Philip should gain an establishment in Lombardy, nothing is more certain, than that both he and his brother of Naples must ever be dependant for support upon the hand that made them kings. They would stand too much in awe of their new-conquered subjects to set up for themselves; and as nothing but their strict alliance with France would be able to secure their dominions, there is no question to be made, but they would punctually pursue this measure.

The *Venetians*, indeed, may at length be brought to acknowledge the necessity of exerting themselves in defence of the liberty of Italy; but vain will be their strongest efforts, and very little good will they be able to do either themselves or the common cause, if they defer engaging in the war, until their allies are all destroyed: and 'tis not unlikely, that even this wise republic, at least its dominions upon the Terra Firma, may at length fall a sacrifice to its caution, to its darling maxim of a neutrality, and of never

ver interposing in the affairs of its neighbours. It is indeed extremely weak, and impolitic, to be always seeking expence and running ourselves into dangers, where there is no necessity for it; but still more imprudent, and absurd is it to let the impending ruin come just to our own doors, before we begin to make use of our strength to oppose it.

Such then is the present situation of Europe, the House of Bourbon every where encroaching upon its neighbours, still adding town to town, and going on from strength to strength, whilst the bordering states, partly thro' their own intestine factions, and partly for want of men and money to carry their more vigorous resolutions into execution, are every where obliged by little and little to retreat before them. Nothing then but the most vigorous interposition of England, at this juncture, is able to save Europe; and, give me leave once more to repeat it, very happy will it be for this nation, as well as for its allies, if such interposition be found successful!

In strict conjunction with the states upon the Continent, we may indeed do much to stop this perpetual progress of the house of Bourbon, and reduce that overgrown Power within such bounds, as the safety of its neighbours may require; but without them we shall be able to effect very little, and even

even less, perhaps, can they do without us : there must be an unreserved, a friendly and active union of all the parties concerned, if they expect that the advantages arising from the common confederacy should be equal to the common danger. Let them remember by what means old Rome became empress of the world, and established its dominions over so many strong and powerful nations. One of its own historians has emphatically expressed it in a very few words, *dum pugnant singuli, universi vincuntur.*

That man then must be wilfully blind, who does not see all this : every body indeed does see it, and in some sort acknowledge it— They acknowledge it, when they say, that 'tis for the interest of England not to suffer the house of Bourbon to become more powerful than it is, nor that any of our Allies upon the continent be reduced under the yoke of France— The only difference therefore between Englishmen is, what are the most proper, the most effectual means to prevent the impending mischief, which all seem so much to dread ; for they that will the end, if they are sincere in their pretensions, must necessarily will the means.

Suppose then, in order to save the nation's money, we were to act with our fleet only in this conjuncture ? how would this affect the French schemes upon the continent ?

nent? will our fleet be able to protect Luxembourg, Antwerp, or Philipburgh? will the whole Royal Navy of England prevent Turin from being besieged, and taken? impossible!— let us then add, (that we drive matters as near as possible) to our continual and strongest efforts by sea, (for these must never be intermitted) a few seasonable subsidies to such of our allies upon the Continent, as are most in want of pecuniary supplies. But even this measure, tho' somewhat more effectual than the former, would upon the experiment, I am afraid, be found not altogether sufficient to answer the mighty purposes we should expect from it. I am not now considering, and weighing nicely as in a pair of scales, whether we might not possibly save the nation two or three hundred thousand pounds a year, if instead of sending them a powerful army, we assisted our allies with our fleet and money only. The difference on either side is a mere trifle, when our *all* is at stake—but what I chiefly insist upon is, that this scheme in all probability would not answer the purpose it is intended for, that it would be neither so advantageous to ourselves, or our allies, as employing as many of our national troops, as might conveniently be spared, and taking a proper number of foreign ones into our pay, and under our own direction. For the money which is voted in parliament for subsidies
to

to foreign powers, may be bestowed we know not how ; some of it may stop at home for prompt payment, for freightage, for the expence of returning ; more of it may fall to the share of hungry indigent courtiers abroad, or be thrown away in magnificent shows, coronations, &c, and but a small share of it be left to be expended according to the original intention of the donors : whereas, by employing our own troops in the service, whether national or hired, we have stronger assurance of the success of their operations, all Europe is convinced that we are heartily concerned in the common cause, that we are resolved to stand by our treaties, and in earnest in defence of our allies. This again will give life and spirit to them in return, and they will all act with double confidence and vigour, when they are assured of being so powerfully supported— and, what cannot be too much regarded, we shall by this means keep equal pace with our neighbours in the art of war, and have an army of well disciplined and veteran soldiers with experienced officers, and generals at their head, if we should again, as at present, have a more immediate call for them ourselves at home.

In short, the danger is now become too great and pressing, as well as too near us, to be gazed upon with indifference, or to be lightly sported with—The grand crisis seems not to be far off, and consequently this is no

time for trying new experiments. Were we to temporize, and act with half our strength only in this perilous conjuncture, that half would most indisputably be thrown away, and at the year's end we should certainly be found to have exhausted ourselves to no manner of purpose—If then we will save Europe, if indeed we will save England as a free, trading, and protestant country, whatever may be the consequence, we must act with our whole force, both by sea and land, both in Europe and America.

Frugality, I grant, is a most excellent virtue as well in the economy of states, as of private families; but, as the wise man has long since observed, there is a time to spend, as well as a time to spare; and sure I am, if ever there was a time to spend, 'tis now; when all that ought to be near and dear to us as Men, as Englishmen, and as Christians is at stake! who does not scorn the abject wretch, who when he is in danger of immediate death, cries out there is no need of being at the expence of a physician, he has a good constitution, has often escaped the grave already, is willing to trust nature, and so dies to save charges? but still more contemptible are those state-misers, who, under the plausible pretence of saving the nation's money, will endanger the peace and happiness of so many millions of people.

Surely 'tis our not seeing the imminent danger we are exposed to, the inevitable ruin which attends us, when once Holland shall be swallowed up by France, that makes us thus languid in its defence, and thus divided upon the expediency of those active measures which are proposed to save it, and which only can save it. Could we but once be made thoroughly sensible of the strict connection between England and the Low-Countries, that they are indeed its barrier, its outworks, we should think no expence too great in affliting them to maintain their independence, and at the same time to secure the flame of war, as far as possible, from reaching our own doors. Our late terrors and alarms will, I hope, produce thus much benefit to the nation, as to persuade us to spend our money rather in averting dangers, and in preventing them from ever reaching our borders, than in laying it out in endeavouring to free ourselves from them, after they have once invaded us, and are beginning to disturb our internal peace and tranquility. Our situation as an island gives us in some measure the advantage of bystanders, while others are engaged in the game. Placed as in a watch tower, secure from any immediate danger of the battle, which is every where raging around us, we have it in our power to direct the storm, to see where the necessary succours are most

wanted, and if we act with proper vigour and unanimity, may always be sure, that our succours will not be altogether ineffectual.

I am not for making romantic conquests upon the continent, such as were formerly, as impolitically as fruitlessly, proposed by our Edwards and our Henries ; but self-interest, yea self-preservation, I think, commands us so far to interfere with the concerns of our neighbours as to endeavour to keep the peace between them, and punctually to fulfil our treaties ; to protect the weaker against the stronger, and so equally to maintain the balance of power, as to be courted by them all in their turns, and to secure ourselves (the point we always ought to aim at) an uninterrupted freedom of trading with them all. This has been the constant plan upon which our wisest princes have formed their conduct ever since the time of Henry VIII, and to their prudent, critical, and vigorous interpositions, from time to time with, their potent neighbours on the continent, not only England in particular, but all the rest of Europe has been more than once obliged for its liberty and independence.

It was upon this plan, after the fatal battle of Pavia, that Henry VIII saved both France and Italy from being swallowed up by the exorbitant power of the house of Austria ; and by these same means likewise, that he afterwards prevented the protestant states of Germany

Germany from being reduced under the absolute dominion of their emperor. Charles V had ambition, courage, wisdom and power enough to have established that fifth monarchy he was so fond of, had he not been quite so eager and forward in the pursuit; but by grasping at too much at once, tho' he was generally successful in all his particular attempts, he miscarried in his grand design. The weight of the king of England thrown into the French, the Italian, or the German scale was always too heavy for him.

Philip II steadily pursued the same scheme of governing and giving laws to Europe, tho' the plan he proceeded upon was somewhat different from that of his father. For what the one endeavoured to effect by open war, the other thought might more easily be brought about by the close undermining arts of policy. If the valour of the father bordered a little upon Quixotism, the wisdom of the son had too much of the fox in it, all his neighbours suspected it, took the alarm, and guarded against it. He began by attempting to reduce the Netherlands to his yoke, to an implicit obedience to all his commands. But here again he was prevented by a queen of England, who both openly assisted the poor distressed States with men and money, and boldly declared herself the head of the protestant

protestant league upon the continent, with the knowledge however, the encouragement, and concurrence of France.

The strict union of France and England at this juncture was too great an obstacle to Philip's ambition, not to make him endeavour all he could to put an end to it. He therefore raises, promotes, and supports a faction of his own in France, and had it not been for English council, English money, and English forces, he had indisputably demolished the French king, and made that state as subservient to his political views, as his own at present are to those of France.

England must therefore at all events be conquered, as the only power in Europe that was both able and willing to interrupt, to impede, and to ruin the success of the Austrian schemes. This drew on the so famous invasion of eighty eight, which the good providence of God rather than our own strength disappointed.

Queen Elizabeth's successor pursued a very different plan of policy from his predecessor. War he seemed to have a natural antipathy to ; full of his own wisdom, and conceited of his superior talents, he depended entirely upon negotiations ; and accordingly his ambassadors were seen parading it in every court of Europe— but as every court in Europe knew king James's pacific disposition, so was he lightly esteemed, and in his turn duped

duped by them all. His allies distrusted and disregarded him ; his enemies, the enemies of the peace of Europe, threatened, cajoled, despised, and governed him. The consequence of which was an universal discontent and uneasiness amongst his own subjects, the loss of the Palatinate and kingdom of Bohemia to his son-in-law, a general invasion of the liberties of the Imperial States, the distress of the king of Denmark, and a dissolution of the alliance between England and France.

The mutual and early distrust between Charles I and his own people, prevented England from making any considerable figure abroad during the reign of this unhappy prince— But had either he or his ministers known how to have made a proper use of the then-situation of Europe, had they at least but taken due care to have kept the protestant interest alive in France, by supporting their oppressed brethren of that country, as they ought to have done, that nation would never have been so potent, and so justly formidable to all its neighbours, as we feel it to be at present.

There are people who pretend to be mighty fond of Oliver Cromwell's system of government ; and nothing is more common than to hear his superior wisdom extolled to the skies ; though, perhaps, after all his political skill may be as justly dubious, as most other

other parts of that fortunate man's character; However, 'tis evident from his whole conduct after he came to the supreme power, that he thought England had something to do with the continent;— tho' if ever there was a time when it might be truly said to have had nothing to do with it, it was during his administration. For so equally balanced were the several principal states of Europe at this juncture, Spain and France, the Empire and Holland, that England could really have nothing to fear from any of them, either for herself or her allies. Nor should I perhaps be thought to go too far in my assertion was I to say, that the crown of France owes more to Cromwell's unseasonable war with Spain at its request, than it does even to the so-much-applauded politics of Richelieu himself. It was the weight of England thrown into the French scale at that critical point of time which has ever since inclined the ballance in its favour.

Charles II, indeed, had he acted as a king of England ought to have done, might have brought matters to their former equality, and once more have restored the ballance of power amongst his neighbours— but instead of this, (thro' an infatuation, I think, peculiar to his family) he was continually throwing more weight into that very scale, which already was but too heavy. Whether corrupted with French gold, or thro' a fondness

ness for that country, whither his unhappy exile had driven him for a refuge. He both oppressed his best and most natural allies the Dutch in two sea-wars, and calmly suffered others to oppress them; he paid very little regard to the complaints and distresses of the Empire at that time invaded by the Turk, and seems to have been even well pleased, whilst the Spanish-Netherlands were every day sinking under the encroachments of France— But his people were not thus easily blinded and misled. They clearly saw their true interest, and most eagerly wished to pursue it. They strenuously opposed the frenchified councils of their King. They addressed and voted assistance to Holland, and a war upon the continent. They readily contributed their money towards carrying it on ; and were willing to sacrifice both their lives and fortunes to stop this continual progress of the French arms. Their actions, as well as speeches at this time, all convince us, that it was the unbiassed opinion of the politicians of those days, that nothing but the vigorous interposition of England could save either Holland, the Empire, or itself from the arms and policy of their common enemy.

The continual murmurs of his subjects drew on at last a few warm remonstrances from their king against the proceedings of the French, and introduced a series of negotiations between the two courts; but as there were no forces ready to back the dispatches

of our ambassadors, their complaints, tho' received with all the outward respect imaginable, were in reality laughed at and despised by the French ; they still went on in their own way ; conquered as they thought fit, and, when they were a little out of breath, gave peace to their neighbours upon their own conditions.

The liberty of Europe seemed now to have no other dependance than upon the meer good will and forbearance of the French king— the Netherlands were, for the greatest part, already reduced under the yoke, the Dutch at mercy, the Empire divided in itself and exhausted by its late war with the Turk, and Spain, tho' backed with the wealth of both the Indies, in want of every thing, men, money, and council, and consequently utterly unable to withstand the next attempts of their persevering enemy, which were every day expected. England indeed had formerly saved Europe, when much such another dangerous crisis threatened its independance, and the house of Austria openly attempted a fifth-monarchy—but what hopes, what reasonable expectations of succour could be raised from thence in the present unhappy situation of that country with James II at its head ? a prince in strict alliance with the common adversary ! a prince, who instead of defending the liberties of Europe, was every day undermining and attacking those of his own Subjects !

jects ! a prince, whose very religion prompted him to wish the utter subversion of the whole protestant interest and its allies ! The French therefore might with some reason expect his concurrence in carrying on their schemes, as he in return might want their aid towards the establishment of his own ? but what good could Europe, or even his own People, ever hope for from such a prince ?

His subjects therefore wisely foreseeing the double danger, the immediate danger they were in both of becoming themselves the slaves of their own king, and their country a province of France, very early entered into the best measures to prevent it. They fly for refuge to the prince of Orange, whose near alliance to the crown gave him the best title to defend its independance, and whose military skill, and warm zeal for the common cause, marked him out as the most proper person, to stem the overbearing torrent of the French success. The Dutch were too sensible of their own interest not to hearken immediately to the cries of their injured and oppressed allies ; a large fleet is fitted out, an army is landed in England, providence prospers the glorious attempt, the tyrant abdicates, peace is restored, and liberty and religion once more reassume their wonted throne in this happy island. From this period followed a long and bloody war between Europe and France

France with a king of England once more at the head of the grand confederacy.

'Tis ridiculous therefore, yea 'tis highly iniquitous to assert, as the manner of some amongst us is, that the war between king William and France was begun meerly to support his title, that it was only a dispute whether he or James should be king of England. If there are any Persons, who are really sincere when they say this, 'tis no want of charity to tell them, that they know nothing at all of the state of Europe at the time of the Revolution. Would king William have tamely winked at the designs of France upon the Netherlands, could he have been persuaded to have stood still, whilst Holland and the Empire had been attacked by that rapacious Power, no one would have been more forward than Lewis himself to have acknowledged his title, and, to have stood by him in defence of it; and as it had before happened to his brother Charles II under Mazarin's administration, the abdicated monarch must soon have been obliged to have sought another country to have taken refuge in. It mattered not to Lewis who was king of England, so it was one he might depend upon, one who would be subservient to his measures, one who would be ready to do, or not to do, just as he would have him. He, who formerly would have made the prince of Orange king of that country, the more easily

easily to have reduced Holland to his dependence, would as little have scrupled to have opposed the Stewarts, and to have maintained him in quiet possession of the kingdom of England, had he thought he could have obliged him to a neutrality thereby, and made him a little more in the French interest.

I readily allow therefore, that the tedious war which ensued between France and England, was entirely in consequence of the Revolution. For had it not been for that great, that critical and important event, the whole Netherlands, and even Holland itself, had long since been swallowed up by their overgrown neighbour, and we ourselves had sunk with them without so much as having fought a single battle for our liberty and religion. Give me leave therefore once more to assert, nor can it be too frequently repeated, that had not England vigorously interposed, as it did, under that heroic prince, whose memory ought ever to be dear to it, had it not largely distributed its wealth amongst the exhausted states of Germany, had it not sent its well-resolved armies to fight its battles upon the continent, all Europe had by this time groaned under the oppressions of those mighty armies ; which were every where seeking to overturn its independance; especially as France, at this juncture, was much more powerful by sea than it is at present, and indeed a match for

for the combined fleets of both England and Holland. I grant indeed, these glorious and successful efforts cost us immense sums of money, as well as a great deal of blood, and that we even yet suffer under the debt contracted at that time—but let us grant likewise, what is equally true, that this blood was spilt and this debt contracted, (not to oppose the family of the Stewarts, but) in defence of our own, and the common safety of Europe. For that we have any trade, any liberty left us at home, any honour and credit abroad, that we have the free exercise of the protestant religion amongst us, is entirely owing to king William's wars upon the continent—We at this day enjoy the benefit of the great actions, which were then performed, and therefore if some small share of the burthen likewise be thrown upon us, we ought to be the more easy and patient under it.

The accession of Spain to the House of Bourbon, upon the death of Charles II, was such a vast accumulation of power, as once more justly alarmed all Europe. For if France was really formidable to all its neighbours, and hardly to be contained within the bounds of moderation, before this great event, what was not to be feared from its activity and perfidy, when supported in its pretensions by the whole power of Spain and the Indies? These considerations, as in true policy

licy they ought, soon drew on another general confederacy, the end of which was, to hinder, if possible, these two potent kingdoms from ever coming both into the same family.

As to England, the whole nation, at this time, plainly saw its true interest, and were for vigorously pursuing it. Nor was there, I believe, a single unprejudiced man in the kingdom, either in the parliament or out of it, who was not for entering into the strictest alliance with Holland and the empire to prevent the fatal effects, which were so justly dreaded from the exorbitant, and still-increasing power of France. The man, who had ventured at this juncture to have dissuaded our entering into the war, or to have publicly asked the question, what has this island to do with the continent, would have been undoubtedly looked upon as a Papist in his heart, or as a bigotted Jacobite—Here then was no Dutch interest to sway our politics, as was iniquitously said of the former reign; here was no Hanoverian rudder, as some people at present are fond of terming it, to steer the English vessel; but we had a princess at the head of our councils with a heart entirely English as she expresses it herself, and no foreign bias to mislead her—and yet the whole nation was unanimous, that our preservation, our very being depended upon our strict union with Holland

Holland and Germany, and that, unless we entered into the war with our whole force, by land as well as sea, all must necessarily sink under the heavy yoke the French were preparing for them.

Our expences are proportionate to the greatness of the danger that threatned us, and the end we proposed ; the national debt still goes on encreasing, whilst our armies are bravely, and successfully engaged upon the continent (not to keep out a weak Pretender from reigning over us, but) in support of the independence of Europe, and in defence of our own liberty and religion— and we had effectually carried our point, we had completely secured both, not only for the present but even for succeeding generations, had we not basely given out when we did ; had we continued true to our own interests and to our repeated engagements with our allies ; had we not suffered ourselves to have been gulled and deceived by a sett of patriots, who under the specious pretence of saving the money of the nation, most vilely betrayed it to the interests of France and a popish Pretender.

Ever since the fatal peace of Utrecht France has been continually encreasing in trade, in wealth, in power ; so that scarcely ever was there a time perhaps, when it was more truly formidable than upon the breaking out of the war which now threatens Europe—I am not at all concerned to know by

by what means they acquired this power, whether by the ill conduct of their neighbours, or by their own superior industry, skill, and policy. The fact is all I am contending for, and that, I think, is indisputable, is confessed on all hands. If, indeed, the blundering politics of former ministers have contributed to the aggrandizement of our enemies, by omitting the proper opportunities of distressing their commerce, and disuniting them from their allies—how are we to act at present? are we also to join in these weak measures, and to persist in strengthening our adversary's hands? or ought we not rather to amend what has been formerly amiss, and to correct in ourselves what we condemn in others?

The late Earl of O——d has been frequently, and with much virulence, accused for suffering the French to grow so great during his being at the head of our public affairs— Be it so! we will even suppose, that he well deserves all that blame, which his enemies have thrown upon him on this score! for I am not at all concerned to defend him— But who are the men, who more especially abuse and condemn his conduct? are they not the very persons, who now ridicule, and so vehemently declame against a war upon the continent? who so strenuously, both in the House and out of it, oppose every vigor-

ous measure which is proposed to humble and depress this still-encreasing power of France? If then, in the opinion of these Gentlemen, the earl of O——d was so notoriously in the wrong, and deserved so very ill of the nation, for not preventing the French from becoming thus great and formidable; surely our present Ministers are entirely in the right, and pursuing the true interest of their country, who take every step, and exert every nerve of government to reduce this exorbitant power within more moderate limits—both administrations, 'tis certain, they cannot think wrong; yet we find them, with their usual consistency, equally opposing both: where then are their principles, and upon what motives may we suppose they act? we may fairly conclude, that the real good of their country, notwithstanding all their clamour, is very little at their heart.

Let us not then, my Countrymen, suffer ourselves to be amused with the idle tales of such as lie in wait to deceive, merely for some gainful and vindictive purpose of their own. The war we are engaged in with France is entirely English. It was begun upon English principles, and will, I trust, be vigorously carried on upon the same. 'Tis not, as some of you have been seduced to believe, whether this or that king shall

shall reign over us, but whether we shall still continue to exist as a free, trading, independant and protestant nation. By every law therefore of God, of nature and of nations, we and our allies have a right (and I hope we shall make a proper use of it) to rise up with an unalterable resolution to reduce the power of that arrogant kingdom to such reasonable bounds, as to be no longer formidable to its neighbours. For our own part, as the late repetition of their intolerable insults seems at present to have rendered us unanimous, at least in resentment ; I hope we shall never prevail upon ourselves to give them peace, till we have stripped them of those instruments with which they have so often attempted to invade and to enslave us ; till not a French ship of twenty guns dares appear on the ocean. Acts of fortitude in defence of our liberties, our country or allies, are entitled to all the praises we can give them ; but those sons of violence, who set up for arbitrators and disposers of kingdoms, are the plagues of the earth, the monstrous devourers of their own species, and every hand ought to be lifted up in vengeance against them.

The present opportunity seems to be critical in our favour, and to invite even the most despairing amongst us to hope, to action, and to perseverance. Our intestine troubles are
happily

happily fled into that gloomy and remote corner of the island, which first gave them birth, and where they can be no longer dangerous to the public safety.. Our late successes at sea have not only greatly distressed our enemies, but at the same time secured a very considerable branch of our old trade, and opened new funds of wealth to the adventurous merchant. The Dutch, sensible at last of their impending ruin, implore our protection, and are ready to enter into any measures we may propose for the general good. By his Majesty's wisdom and indefatigable pains the Head of the Empire is entirely in our interest, as by his moderation and seasonable interposition peace is once more restored to the whole Germanic-body, and those civil dissentions happily extinguished, which have hitherto prevented the several States of those vast regions from acting vigorously against the common enemy, and repaying their insidious adversary for all that bloodshed, ruin and devastation, which he has wrought amongst them. The King of Sardinia still bravely holds his enemies at bay, nor will that second branch of the house of Bourbon be ever able to take fast root in Italy if this heroic prince be as strongly supported by his allies, as his invincible courage deserves. To crown the whole, we have a General of our own, whose high-birth gives him

an indisputable title to be placed at the head of the confederacy, whose undaunted courage has been tried in the bloody fields of Cœringen and Fontenoy, whose military activity we all confidently rely upon, and whose quick and surprizing success in freeing our own country from those heavy chains, which rebellion was preparing for it, is, I believe, a happy omen of those future triumphs which he will one day enjoy, for having delivered Europe from the insolent and ambitious attempts of France.

What a fortunate conjuncture is this, and what advantages may we not reasonably expect from it, if it be properly pursued, if it be pushed with all that vigour, steadiness, unanimity, which the great occasion calls for? However potent the house of Bourbon may be, however plentiful in its resources, we know by frequent experience, that 'tis neither inexhaustible nor invincible, that, like other sublunary powers, it must yield at last to superior force. Whilst England and Holland, the Empire and King of Sardinia continue firmly united, and true to each other's interest, 'tis impossible but France will sink under the weight of so many powerful enemies, and be reduced to accept of such terms as the high allies shall think proper to impose upon it, as well for their future as their present security— 'Tis then, and not

not before, that we shall receive and enjoy
the reward of all our blood spilt, and trea-
sure laid out in the cause of Europe in
an extended and uninterrupted commerce
in a safe, honourable, and lasting general
peace.

F. I. N. I. S.

Just Published,

A LETTER to a TORY FRIEND

UPON THE

Present Critical Situation of our Affairs :

WHEREIN,

Every Objection of the Disaffected to the Present Government is fully answered ; the fond Distinction a King *de Facto* absolutely refuted ; and his Majesty King George demonstrated to be King of Great Britain, &c. *de Jure*, in the strongest Sense of the Word.

L O N D O N:

Printed for M. COOPER, at the Globe in Pater-noster-Row
M DCC XLVI. [Price 1